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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LJUBLJANA 000184

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/ERA, EUR/CE

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EUN](#) [PGOV](#) [HR](#) [SI](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVENIAN FM WILL SKIP DUBROVNIK SUMMIT, CITING
SANADER'S JULY 4 STATEMENTS

REF: LJUBLJANA 183

Classified By: CDA Brad Freden, Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

Summary

1. (C) MFA Director-General for Bilateral Affairs Iztok Mirosic informed CDA the afternoon of July 6 that the Foreign Minister would not go to Dubrovnik for the Croatia Summit after all (reftel). Mirosic explained that the FM had changed his plans after hearing Sanader's comments at his July 4 farewell speech. He said he was being mild when he termed it "not amicable rhetoric." He did not see how FM Zbogor could have a productive visit in Croatia. He also worried about the public perception of U.S. pressure on Slovenia. He stressed that the Foreign Minister was willing to meet with the Deputy Secretary and Croatian FM Jandrokovic and possibly Swedish FM Bildt any other time and place. CDA pushed back hard and urged that the FM reconsider and attend. Mirosic undertook to pass the message to the FM, and said he would stay in touch. End Summary.

Sanader's Statements of Particular Concern

2. (C) Mirosic stated that Slovenia was "very concerned about Sanader's statement. Mirosic pointed to two specific quotes that Sanader made at the HDZ Convention on July 4:

"You won't get one centimeter of Croatia's territory; it's not for sale. You won't succeed despite your non-European attitude and extortion. Croatia will become an EU member state and Slovenia will have to vote in Croatia's favor." and

"I therefore request the EU to lift the blockade, to stop this crazy performance Slovenes are trying to put on. They wanted to prevent Croatia from becoming a NATO member country, but didn't succeed because someone stood up and said 'Enough is enough, Croatia will become a NATO member!'"

That "someone" is widely - if also falsely - interpreted to mean Washington. Mirosic commented that Slovenia was surprised and did not understand such severe attacks, although he noted that Slovenia had not decreased its level of rhetoric despite the EU calling for a time of reflection. He stressed that after "Saturday's severe attack," it was not appropriate for a Ministerial visit to Dubrovnik.

3. (C/NF) CDA pushed back hard and urged the MFA to reconsider. He argued that the benefits of going exceeded the possible risks, and that the converse was also true: Slovenia risked being seen - rightly or wrongly - as the country that refused to play ball. Mirosic stressed that Croatia would spin the meeting as further proof that Slovenia was bending to U.S. pressure and focus on this rather than focusing on the work necessary to reach a compromise

agreement. He did not see a way to overcome the impression that, after Saturday's speech, FM Zbogar was going to Croatia under U.S. pressure. He also thought that FM Zbogar's attendance would provoke another round of media discussions and Slovenia would rather have this time be a cooling off period.

FM Not Against a Meeting, Just Against Dubrovnik Now

¶4. (C) Mirosic emphasized that FM Zbogar was willing to meet with the Deputy Secretary and Croatian FM Jandrokovic and possibly Swedish FM Bildt (or any combination thereof) wherever, whenever, but not in Dubrovnik. He added that Slovenia would like to wait for the new Croatian government and see how it would approach the issue. Slovenia would like to see a fresh start without unnecessary public statements. The MFA position, however, remained that the latest Olli Rehn proposal served as the best basis on which to resume talks. He echoed PM Pahor's opinion that the two sides were very close.

Comment

¶5. (C) We are unsure whether the FM will change his mind and go to Dubrovnik in response to CDA's urging. In either case, any U.S. statement should be careful to avoid the impression that we are pressuring Slovenia. Although Slovenia and we know that the U.S. did not pressure Slovenia into the successful NATO result, such an impression would make it even harder for Slovenia to rally the public and political support

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it needs for a compromise with Croatia.
FREDEN